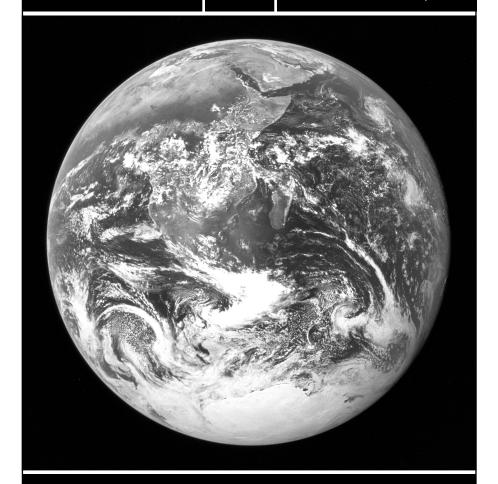
GREENWICH VILLAGE ORCHESTRA BARBARA YAHR, MUSIC DIRECTOR

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2019

3:00PM

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, NYC



2018-2019 SERSON THE ERRTH IN CONTEXT

A Note From the Music Director

Greetings!

The GVO is proud to conclude our 2018–2019 Season at beautiful and historic All Saints Church. We've been excited to share the stage with stellar soloists from around the country and talent from within the GVO itself. With works by composers from Chris Brubeck, Franz Schubert, Samuel Barber, Gustav Holst, and more, we are thrilled to have presented a season that explored the many facets of what an orchestra can be. This orchestra is a labor of love for all of us, and we enjoy nothing more than sharing the fruits of our labors with you, our audience.

Barbara Yahr
 Music Director

SUPPORT THE ORCHESTRA

Established in 1986, the GVO is a symphony orchestra composed entirely of volunteers. By day, we are accountants, artists, attorneys, carpenters, editors, physicians, professors, programmers, psychologists, retirees, scientists, secretaries, teachers, and writers. As musicians, we are dedicated to bringing the best possible performances of great music to our audiences and are committed to serving the community while keeping our ticket prices affordable

The GVO operates on a lean budget — our concerts would not be possible without generous donations from our audience and our musicians. A gift of any amount enables to the orchestra to:

- · Hire our fabulous Music Director, Barbara Yahr;
- Attract talented soloists;
- Perform outreach concerts in hospitals and community centers;
- Develop and enhance our *Together in Music* initiative, which makes music accessible to children and families with special needs.

Become an integral part of GVO's music! Make a contribution to the continued success of the GVO:

- In person at the box-office
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The Greenwich Village Orchestra is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Program Order

Sunday, May 19, 2019 at 3:00pm All Saints Church, 230 East 60th Street, NYC

Barbara Yahr, Music Director and Conductor

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Quiet City

Phil Parsons, trumpet
Jason Smoller, English horn

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

The Planets

Mars, the Bringer of War Venus, the Bringer of Peace Mercury, the Winged Messenger Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age Uranus, the Magician Neptune, the Mystic

There will be no intermission in this concert

Please silence phones and other devices Flash photography is not permitted during the performance

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



This concert marks the end of our 2018–19 season. Please go to *gvo.org* and sign up for our mailing list to be the first to know what we have planned for the coming year...

Notes on the Program

Copland, Quiet City

Early in his career, Copland was so eager to write theatrical music that he composed a score for a nonexistent play: *Music for the Theatre*, originally called "Incidental Music for an Imaginary Play". But during the 1930s, Copland became involved in the Group Theater, a company founded by Lee Strasberg and Harold Clurman to present socially relevant drama at popular prices. Copland's studio at Steinway Hall was even one of the group's first meeting places. Clurman later recalled that Copland's own efforts to create a distinctly American body of music had inspired the Group in the beginning. Copland often attended rehearsals, and he became friendly with several of the Group's members, including Elia Kazan, Clifford Odets—whose 1937 play, *The Golden Boy*, was one of the troupe's biggest hits—and Irwin Shaw.

Although Irwin Shaw is remembered today as the bestselling author of the 1970 novel *Rich Man, Poor Man*, which became a successful TV miniseries, he began his career working in radio and writing film scripts and plays. In 1939, after the Group had successfully staged Shaw's *The Gentle People*, Copland agreed to write incidental music for a production of Shaw's *Quiet City* later that year. "The script", Copland recalled, "was about a young trumpet player who imagined the night thoughts of many different people in a great city and played trumpet to express his emotions and to arouse the consciences of the other characters and of the audience". But the story of Gabe Mellon, who had changed his name in rejection of his Jewish background and became a wealthy businessman, and his struggling brother, trumpet player David Mellnikoff, obviously resonated strongly with Copland at the time, and he wrote music of unexpected depth and beauty.

When the Group Theater production of *Quiet City* never made it beyond a couple of tryout performances, Copland decided to salvage parts of his score. During the summer of 1940, while he was teaching at the first season of the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, he fashioned a short "suite" for trumpet and string orchestra from the incidental music, adding a solo english horn "for contrast and to give the trumpeter breathing spaces". (Copland recycled other music from the complete score for parts of *Appalachian Spring*.) From the soft, gauzy opening to the haunted, nostalgic trumpet melodies, the piece is a pitch-perfect city scene from the 1930s. Copland was amused when reviewers noted its affinity to Whitman's "mystic trumpeter" and Ives's The Unanswered Question, with its yearning trumpet solos. To him, it was simply a portrait of Shaw's restless and troubled trumpet player (Copland marks the opening trumpet solo "nervous, mysterious"). Copland's short, atmospheric piece has become one of his most performed works, and as Copland pointed out, "David Mellnikoff has long since been forgotten!"

- Phillip Huscher

Notes on the Program

Holst, The Planets

Gustav Holst's father was a piano teacher whose grandfather had once taught the harp to the Imperial Grand Duchesses in Saint Petersburg, and had emigrated to England from Riga. Gustav's mother, a sweet lady whose jumpy nerves were upset by music, died young, and Gustav and his brother were brought up by their Aunt Nina. Gustav inherited his mother's overstrung nerves, and later in life he was several times near mental collapse. He was a timid child, so nearsighted that as a grown man he could not, even when wearing spectacles, recognize members of his own family at six yards. His nights alternated between insomnia and nightmares. Much of his life he suffered from neuritis so severe that he had to dictate some of his music, including portions of the densely intricate score of *The Planets*. He played violin and keyboards as a boy, but the neuritis put a stop to both, and other than occasional conducting, his last activity as a performer was as trombone player in the Scottish Orchestra and with the Carl Rosa Opera Company from 1898 until 1903.

He studied composition at the Royal College of Music, London, with Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, and it was as a composer and teacher that he really found himself. He taught most of his adult life, at the James Allen and Saint Paul's schools for girls, at Morley College for Working Men and Women, and briefly in 1932 at Harvard. He kept the association with Saint Paul's until his death—the alumnae used to identify themselves to him by naming the Bach cantatas they had sung under his direction—and it was there that he worked on *The Planets*, in the soundproof room of the new music wing opened in 1913, a paradise where he could be undisturbed and indulge in the near-crematorial indoor temperatures he favored.

Sometime after the turn of the century, Holst came into the thrall of astrology. He was reluctant to speak of this, though he admitted that casting horoscopes for his friends was his "pet vice". *The Planets* is an astrological work; "As a rule I only study things that suggest music to me", Holst once wrote, "recently the character of each planet suggested lots to me."

For the 1920 premiere, Holst provided this note: "These pieces were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets; there is no programme music, neither have they any connection with the deities of classical mythology bearing the same names. If any guide to the music is required the subtitle to each piece will be found sufficient, especially if it be used in the broad sense. For instance, Jupiter brings jollity in the ordinary sense, and also the more ceremonial type of rejoicing associated with religions or national festivities. Saturn brings not only physical decay, but also a vision of fulfilment. Mercury is the symbol of mind."

Mars, the Bringer of War — The association of Mars and war goes back as far as history records. The planet's satellites are Phobos (fear) and Deimos (terror), and its astrological symbol (♂) combines shield and spear. Holst's Mars is a fierce, remorseless *allegro*. The British conductor Sir Adrian Boult recalled that the aspect of war Holst most wanted to express was its stupidity.

Venus, the Bringer of Peace — After the moon, Venus is the brightest object in our night sky. The identification with Ishtar, Aphrodite's Babylonian predecessor, goes back to at least 3000 BCE. In The *Principles and Practices of Astrology*, Noel Tyl tells us that, to astrologers, "when the disorder of Mars is past, Venus restores peace and harmony." Horn and flutes answer

Notes on the Program

each other in this *adagio*. High violins have an extended song, but the dominant colors are the cool ones of flutes, harps, and celesta.

Mercury, the Winged Messenger — Hermes, god of cattle, sheep, and vegetation, deity of dreams, and conductor of the dead, first assumes the role of messenger in the *Odyssey*. Mercury, his Roman counterpart, was primarily a god of merchandise and merchants, and his winged sandals and winged cap are taken over from Hermes. To astrologers, Mercury is "the thinker". The composer makes this a virtuosic scherzo, unstable, nervously changeable in meter and harmony—in a word, mercurial.

Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity — The most massive of the planets, possessing dozens of satellites (one of them larger than the planet Mercury), named for the light-bringer, the rain-god, the god of thunderbolts, of the grape and the tasting of the new wine, of oaths, treaties, and contracts, and from whom we take the word "jovial". "Jupiter", says Noel Tyl, "symbolizes expansiveness, scope of enthusiasm, knowledge, honor, and opportunity ... [and] corresponds to fortune, inheritance, bonanza". Holst gives us an unmistakably English Jupiter. In 1921 Holst took the big tune in the middle and set to it as a unison song with orchestra the words, "I vow to thee, my country".

Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age — Saturn is the outermost of the planets known in ancient times. The god is associated with Cronus and traditionally portrayed as an old man. To quote Tyl again, Saturn is "man's time on earth, his ambition, his strategic delay, his wisdom toward fulfillment, his disappointments and frustrations." Another *adagio* dominated by the sound of flutes and harps, like Venus in both characteristics, but static, full of the suggestion of bells, and serene at the last. This movement was Holst's favorite.

Uranus, the Magician — The first planet discovered in the age of the telescope, specifically in 1781 by Sir William Herschel, who wanted to name it for George III. In astrology, Uranus rules invention, innovation, and astrology itself. Holst begins with a triple invocation (trumpets and trombones, then tubas, then timpani) and leads that way into a movement of galumphing dance. At the end, the apparitions disappear into the night.

Neptune, the Mystic — Pluto was discovered in 1930, so when Holst wrote his suite, Neptune, discovered in 1846, was the extreme point in our system. In 2006 the International Astronomical Union stripped Pluto of its status as a planet and consigned it to a new category, dwarf planet; and although the composer Colin Matthews created a Pluto movement in 2000 as an addition to Holst's original, Holst apparently had things right all along.

In astrology, Neptune means confusion and mystic rapport with other worlds. Neptune is invisible to the naked eye, and to Holst it speaks of distance, mystery, unanswerable questions. He makes of it another slow movement in swaying, irregular meter, softly dissonant in harmony, full of the sound of shimmering harps and celesta, and dissolving in the voices of an invisible chorus of women.

- Michael Steinberg

DEDICATION

We dedicate our final concert this season to our colleague, friend, and former GVO member,

Janet Whitt,

who passed away in 2017.

Janet was a violinist and dedicated member of the orchestra from its earliest days and while her disability often made getting to rehearsals and concerts a challenge, she didn't let it stop her.

Playing with the GVO was important to Janet and when she moved upstate after many years in the orchestra, she never forgot us.

And we will never forget her.

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Barbara Yahr, music director

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Barbara Yahr

Now in her seventeenth season with the GVO, Music Director Barbara Yahr continues to lead the orchestra to new levels of distinction. With blockbuster programming and internationally renowned guest artists, the GVO under Barbara's baton, has grown into an innovative, collaborative institution offering a rich and varied season of classical music to our local community.

A native of New York, Ms. Yahr's career has spanned from the United States to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Her previous posts include Principal Guest Conductor of the Munich Radio Orchestra, Resident Staff Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony under Maestro Lorin Maazel and Music Director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra. She has appeared as a guest conductor with such orchestras as the Bayerische Rundfunk, Dusseldorf Symphoniker, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Frankfurt



Radio, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Janacek Philharmonic, New Japan Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony, and the National Symphony in Washington D.C. She has also conducted the orchestras in Columbus, Detroit, Calgary, Chattanooga, Louisiana, Richmond, New Mexico, Lubbock, and Anchorage, as well as the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, New World Symphony, and the Chautauqua Festival Symphony Orchestra. She has also appeared in Israel conducting in both Jerusalem and Eilat. As an opera conductor, she has led new productions in Frankfurt, Giessen, Tulsa, Cincinnati, Minnesota and at The Mannes School of Music in NYC. Most recently, she has coached the actors on the set of the Amazon Series *Mozart in the Jungle*, and in October 2016, she conducted the season opener of the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra and led the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra musicians in a free concert of Dvorak and Mozart.

Ms. Yahr is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Middlebury College where she studied piano and philosophy. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Conducting from the Curtis Institute of Music where she studied with Max Rudolf and an MM in Music Theory from the Manhattan School of Music. She was a student of Charles Bruck at the Pierre Monteux School in Hancock, Maine.

A central focus of Ms. Yahr's career has been her commitment to finding new ways to reach a broader population with music. This path ultimately led her to pursuing an MA in Music Therapy at NYU and training at the Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy in NYC. Her pioneering, community music therapy project, *Together in Music*, brings orchestral music to the special needs community with uniquely interactive programs presented annually by the GVO.

Barbara is married to Dr. Alexander Lerman and has two adult step children, Abe and Dania, and a 16 year old son, Ben.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Phil Parsons

As a diverse musician and trumpet player, Phil Parsons enjoys performing in various settings including orchestras, musical theater, and big bands. With his formal training from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music (BM) in classical music, Phil has performed with orchestras including the Las Vegas Philharmonic, Lexington Philharmonic, and Symphony Orchestra Augusta. He has also played with New York City orchestras such as the Greenwich Village Orchestra, Chelsea Symphony, and the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony. In the jazz genre, he has appeared with headliners such as Ben Vereen, Clint Holmes, Ronnie Rose, Jo Belle Yonely, Tony DeSare, and Ann Hampton Callaway.



While living in Las Vegas, he recorded three albums: Putting on a Show, an original musical by Christopher Lash, Four of Us

with the award winning University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Jazz Ensemble I, and *Lost Vegas* with the UNLV Wind Orchestra playing as principal trumpet.

Phil is currently the GVO's principal trumpet and librarian.

Jason Smoller

Oboist Jason Smoller maintains an active freelance performance career in New York City, where he plays regularly with the Handel Festival Orchestra, The Chelsea Symphony, the Greenwich Village Orchestra, Apotheosis Opera, and The Dream Unfinished. In 2017, he gave the New York Premiere of the English Horn Concerto by Peteris Vasks with the Chelsea Symphony.

In addition to concerts in many of New York's most iconic venues, including Carnegie Hall and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, he has appeared with orchestras around the United States and in China, France, and the Dominican Republic. He has performed alongside Joshua Bell, Philippe Entremont, and Itamar Zorman and under the batons of Kurt Masur, Lorin Maazel, Valery Gergiev, and Daniel Barenboim.



He holds an MM degree in Orchestral Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied oboe with Stephen Taylor and Robert Botti and English horn with Tom Stacy, and a BA in French and music from Brown University. Jason plays a 2015 Laubin oboe and a 1969 Laubin English horn.

By day, he is the Director of Development for the New York City Opera.

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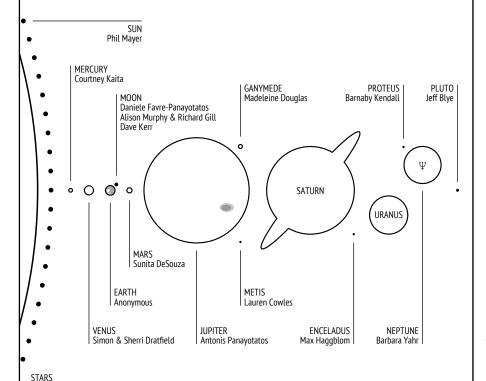
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